



"There can be no greater measure of a society than how it

*treats its children. Our children are our **most precious resource**, and they are our future. Today's children are tomorrow's heads of state, captains of industry, spiritual and community leaders, and stars of the sports, arts and entertainment world.*

We hold their future in our hands – and our future is in their hands."

—Ten Critical Threats to Children:
Warning Signs for the Next Millennium,
National League of Cities,
National School Boards Association,
Joe Dimaggio Children's Hospital,
Youth Crime Watch of America.



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Remember...it's up to you to choose what's best for you and your child

Parents' Checklist

- ☐ Is the facility licensed?
- ☐ What will my child's day be like in child care?
- ☐ What am I responsible for bringing?
- ☐ How will an illness of my child be handled?
- ☐ Does the provider require advance notice if my child will be absent or late?
- ☐ Did we discuss whom to reach in an emergency?
- ☐ What happens if the provider is ill or there is an emergency?
- ☐ Will every child have a car seat/seat belt on field trips?
- ☐ What happens if I'm late for pick-up?
- ☐ What are the procedures for releasing my child to someone other than myself?
- ☐ What is the emergency evacuation plan?
- ☐ What are the amounts and dates fees are due?
- ☐ Did we review written agreements?

Resource and Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (R&Rs) exist in every county in California to provide comprehensive information and assistance on child care and children's services to parents and providers.

Their services include:

- Referrals to all types of child care
- Child care referrals for all children, including those with special needs
- Information on subsidies for low income families
- Information on subsidies for Cal WORKs families
- Information on classes, support groups and special events for parents and/or children
- Information on employer sponsored child care
- Information on how you might become a provider

CHILD CARE



How to make
the
Choice

A growing body of research shows that positive early experiences can influence the rest of a child's life. Finding child care that meets your needs and the needs of your child is an important—and often exhausting—task. Below are some suggestions to make your search easier and more successful:

Identify the types of child care available in your area

In-Home Caregivers

Provide care in the child's home. Care may be provided by a relative, neighbor or person hired by the family.

Family Child Care Homes

Care is provided in the home of another person, who may care for several children.

Child Care Centers

Provide care outside the home in a group setting. Centers may be public or private, full or part-time, and operate independently or as part of a school, agency, business or religious organization.

School-Age Child Care

Serves children ages 5 to approximately 12 years of age before and after school and during school vacations. It is located in a variety of settings, including schools, recreation centers, community centers and family child care homes.

Shop for care and compare

Before visiting, telephone several providers and facilities. Ask questions about numbers of children, hours, cost and background of the providers. If you're satisfied, arrange a visit.

Investigate possible choices

To find information on available child care in your area:

- Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.
- Contact your regional Department of Social Services office which licenses child care facilities.
- Ask relatives, friends, neighbors.
- Check the Yellow Pages under child care.
- Check the newspaper and community bulletin boards.

Observe

- Are there enough adults to give adequate attention to all the children? Do the children seem happy and busy with play?
- Is there enough space indoors and outdoors so that all children can move freely?
- Does the provider/staff appear to enjoy caring for the children?
- Is equipment safe and in good repair?
- Are there any problems with discipline, meals, naptime, etc.?
- Does the caregiver provide a variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks and climbing equipment, that your child will find interesting?
- Is there adequate heating, cooling and ventilation?
- Does the facility have a fire extinguisher, smoke alarm, and emergency plan?
- Are medicines, poisons, detergents and matches stored out of reach?
- Are firearms or other weapons in the home? If so, are they safely locked away?

Ask Questions

- Can I visit at any time?
- How do you handle discipline?
- What do you do if a child is sick?
- What would you do in case of an emergency?
- What training have you (and staff) had?
- May I see a copy of your license and/or other certification?
- Do you have a substitute or back-up caregiver?
- May I have a list of references?

Check References

- Check with other parents to find out if their experience with the caregiver was a positive one.
- Call Trust Line at 1-800-822-8490 to see if an In-Home Caregiver has passed a background screening.

Once you pick a provider, follow the quality of care your child receives

- Get to know some of the other parents.
- Notice how your child reacts to the care received.
- Visit and observe your child.
- Talk with the provider/staff. Tell him/her about your child's needs and preferences.

Good child care includes

- A caregiver who provides warm and loving care and guidance for your child and who works with you and your family to make sure your child grows and learns in the best possible way.
- Your interest and involvement in your child's program.

